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Karen Schimke
President and CEO

Memorandum of Support

S. 1646 (Huntley)

An ACT to amend the mental hygiene law to permanently extend Timothy's Law.

S. 185 (Morahan) / A. 4572 (Rivera)

An ACT to amend Timothy's Law to include the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy was a strong supporter of Timothy's Law and a member of Timothy's Law Campaign. Timothy's Law requires commercial insurance carriers in New York to provide coverage for the treatment of mental health and chemical dependency services at the same level as treatment of other health conditions. Together, these two bills will continue the protections New Yorkers deserve in their mental health coverage.

Timothy's Law is scheduled to expire at the end of 2009. While the sunset was scheduled to ensure that there was time to study the effect of the law, it is clear to advocates and organizations working with people with psychiatric disabilities, that the law has improved access to services. It is time to make the law permanent so people can be assured that their coverage will continue. S. 1646 would accomplish this goal.

S. 185 / A. 4572 would include post traumatic stress disorder under Timothy's Law, and grant access to life saving treatment for all individuals suffering from PTSD. PTSD is a psychiatric reaction to a traumatic event. It is a *treatable* mental illness. Studies have shown that combat veterans may suffer from PTSD along with such populations as foster children, children who have been abused and victims of rape and other types of violence. There is a very real need to ensure that all persons, regardless of the type of trauma suffered, their age or type of medical coverage, have access to services that will help them recover.

For these reasons, SCAA supports these two bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Karen Schimke'.

Karen Schimke
President and CEO

February 10, 2009